

E-MAIL AS A RECORD QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

January, 2008

Revision 2



DEFINITIONS

What is an Electronic Mail (E-Mail) Message?

A document created or received on an electronic mail system including brief notes, more formal or substantive narrative documents, and any attachments, such as word processing and other electronic documents, which may be transmitted with the message.

What is an Electronic Record?

Any information that is recorded in a form that only a computer can process and that satisfies the definition of a Federal record.

What is a Record?

Recorded information, in any format, that is:

- *Created* in the course of business,
- *Received* for action, or
- *Needed* to document DOE activities.

What is a recordkeeping system?

A system, paper-based or electronic, that:

- *collects*, organizes and categorizes records, and
- *facilitates* their preservation, retrieval, use and disposition.



E-Mail Messages Are Records When...

- they are made or received by an agency under Federal law or in connection with public business; and
- they are appropriate for preservation as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the Government, or because of the information value of the data they contain.

Principal Categories of Materials to Be Preserved

- Records that document the formulation and execution of basic policies and decisions and the taking of necessary actions.
- Records that document important meetings.
- Records that facilitate action by agency officials and their successors.
- Records that make possible a proper scrutiny by the Congress or by duly authorized agencies of the Government.
- Records that protect the financial, legal, and other rights of the Government and of persons directly affected by the Government's actions.

E-Mail Messages That May Constitute Federal Records

- E-mail providing key substantive comments on a draft action memorandum, if the e-mail message adds to a proper understanding of the formulation or execution of Agency action.
- E-mail providing documentation of significant Agency decisions and commitments reached orally (person-to-person, by telecommunications, or in conference) and not otherwise documented in Agency files.
- E-mail conveying information of value on important Agency activities, if the e-mail message adds to a proper understanding of Agency operations and responsibilities.



See EMCBC Records Management Policies, Plans and Procedures for detailed instructions and guidance:

- *PS-243-01, "Records Management Policy"*
- *IP-243-03, "Identifying, Filing and Maintaining Records"*
- *IP-243-04, "File Plan Creation and Maintenance"*
- *IP-243-02, "Vital Records Identification and Protection"*
- *PL-243-05, "Records Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Recovery Plan"*

FOR RECORDS ASSISTANCE CONTACT A MEMBER OF THE EMCBC RECORDS MANAGEMENT TEAM:

Brian Devir (513) 246-0604

brian.devir@emcbc.doe.gov

Kathy Reid (513) 246-0607

kathy.reid@emcbc.doe.gov



DOE Chief Information Officer (CIO)

The DOE CIO is a link between Information Technology and Records Management -- To view Records Management Policy and Directives, Federal Regulations, and other Guidance on Records Management visit the CIO website:

<http://cio.energy.gov/records-management.htm>



National Archives & Records Administration (NARA)

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is America's record keeper. Since 1934, NARA has provided comprehensive records management support and archival services to the Federal Government.

NARA's Records Center Program (RCP) has assembled a dedicated team of records professionals to serve you and your records center needs. For additional information on NARA visit the website at <http://www.archives.gov/frc/programs.html>.

Points to Remember about E-Mail

- Agency e-mail systems are for "official use" only by authorized personnel.
- Never mix personal and business messages in the same e-mail.
- Before deleting any e-mail message, the author should determine whether it meets the legal definition of a record and, if so, preserve a copy of the message.
- Printed messages kept as a record should contain essential transmission, receipt data, and attachments; if not, print the data or annotate the printed copy.
- Printed messages and essential transmission and receipt data should be filed with related files of the office.
- Delete messages that are not records when no longer needed.
- Delete messages that are records, within 180 days after they have been printed and placed in a paper recordkeeping system.



The EMCBC does not have an approved electronic record-keeping system; therefore, e-mail records must be printed and placed into appropriate paper record files.

Aren't e-mail records kept on backup tapes or disks by the Office of Information Resource Management?

No. Routine system backups are created to facilitate restoration of a system or file in case of accidental or unintentional loss and are not approved recordkeeping systems.

EMCBC Records Custodians:

Office of the Director – Kim Johnson

Office of Logistics Management – Joanne Merritt

Office of Legal Services – Roxie King

Office of Contracting – Patricia Brechlin

Office of Technical Services & Office of

Information Resource Mgmt. – Shirley Caldwell-Ramsey

Office of Human Resources – Robin Campbell

Office of Financial Management – Martrice Glover

Office of Civil Rights & Diversity – Regina Neal

Mail Room – Malcolm Williams



NARA Factoid:

*The National Archives and Records Administration estimates that the Federal Government creates over 36 **billion** e-mail messages a year.*